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THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST:

A MISSIONARY SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRES-
BYTERIAN CHURCH, IN PHILADELPHIA,

MAY 23^d, 1805.

BY EDWARD D. GRIFFIN, A. M.

ONE OF THE PASTORS OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH IN NEWARK, (NEW JERSEY.)

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IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

May 24th, 1805.

“ Resolved, That the standing committee of missions be directed to present the thanks of this Assembly to Mr. Griffin for his sermon, and that they request a copy thereof, and take measures for publishing the same.”

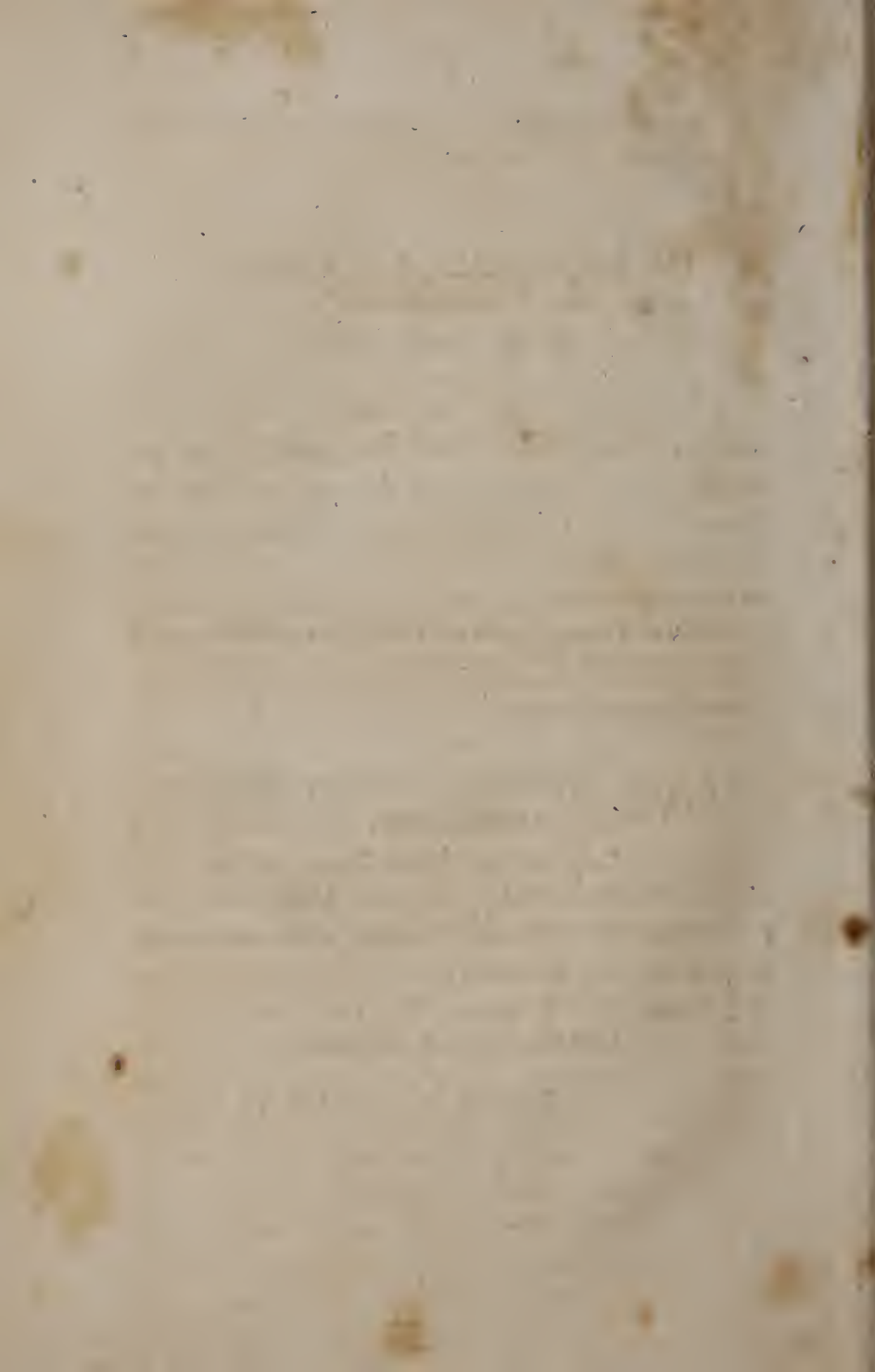
A true Copy, NATHANIEL IRWIN, Clk.

BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF
MISSIONS;

Resolved, That the thanks of this committee be presented to the Revd. Mr. Griffin for his missionary sermon delivered at their request.

Extract from the Minutes,

JACOB J. JANEWAY, Secy.



A SERMON.

COL. 1. 16.

FOR BY HIM WERE ALL THINGS CREATED THAT ARE IN HEAVEN, AND THAT ARE IN EARTH, VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE, WHETHER THEY BE THRONES, OR DOMINIONS, OR PRINCIPALITIES, OR POWERS; ALL THINGS WERE CREATED BY HIM, AND FOR HIM.

WHILE worldly minds are confined to a few surrounding objects, unconscious of the great scenes above them, like men in a cavern who have never beheld the glories of nature; the devout christian delights to raise his eyes, and contemplate the perfections of his Creator. He feels a noble and extinguishable ardour to ascend in meditation to everlasting things, to lose sight of earth in his sublime excursions, to tread the pavements of heaven, to take a near view of God, and from that exalted summit to look abroad among his Father's works. The point to which his thoughts aspire, the highest that a created mind can reach, is that from whence he may view the amazing purposes which God is car-

rying into execution, and by this mean discover the moral character of their Author, and the tendency of all things. On this eminence stood the great apostle of the Gentiles, when he pronounced the words of our text. Let us accompany him to that commanding height ; and while we view, may the divine spirit clear the film from our mental sight, that we may gaze with amazement, adoration, and love.

Placing ourselves at the beginning of time, and looking back into eternity, we are anxious to know what induced the ever blessed God to exercise his power in the production of creatures, and what valuable object he proposed to accomplish by all his works. In order to a right solution of these points, we must conceive an eternal propensity in the fountain of love to overflow, and fill with happiness numberless vessels fitted to receive it. We must conceive an eternal propensity in God to manifest the richness and perfection of his nature to creatures; not for the sake of ostentatious display, but to enrich the universe with the knowledge of his glory, and to lay a foundation for general confidence and delight in him: A state of unproductive repose was not a condition becoming himself. As the sun exists in his proper and most glorious state when shedding his beams to bless the dependent planets, so God is conceived to exist in his proper and most glorious state when he is benevolently exercising his perfections on the created system, and, so to speak, hangs them around him like an external robe of light, to awaken the wonder and joy of creatures. The stupendous object which he contemplated was an immense and beautifully ad-

justed kingdom of holy and happy creatures, in which he should be acknowledged as the glorious head, and they should take their proper place at his feet; in which he should be felt as the center of attraction to draw all its parts into union with himself, and as a sun to shed blessed influence upon the whole; and over which, when its prosperity should be completed, he might *rejoice with joy, and rest in his love.**

This was the glorious end which his goodness eternally proposed: and now we are to view the means which he ordained for its accomplishment. The principal mean adopted was the appointment of his Son to act as his vicegerent in the creation and government of all worlds, to assume a created nature into personal union with himself, and thus to fill up the infinite chasm between God and his creation, and be the grand connecting bond between finite and infinite natures. As head of his Father's kingdom, to which he was to be closely united by his assumed nature, and as the medium of all intercourse between that kingdom and his Father, he was to form the most perfect union between God and his creatures. *As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.*† Put forward into a public station as his Father's organ and image, to be seen by every eye, he was to bring out the invisible God to view from the hidden recesses of his nature, —to bring down the incomprehensible God within the reach of finite apprehensions, and to serve as a

* Zeph. 3. 17.

† John 17. 21, 23.

mild glass through which creatures might view the splendours of divine perfection without dazzling and paining their sight.

This is the Christ, the anointed agent, of whom our text declares, *By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and FOR HIM.* This is not said of him simply as God, but as THE CHRIST, who fills a middle place between God and man, and partakes of both natures. The character intended is pointedly marked in the context, every part of which applies only to Christ. The apostle is treating of the Messiah, and describes him as *the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature, the head of the body, the church, the first born from the dead, in whom we have redemption through his blood*; all of which can be understood of him only as Mediator, and not merely as second person of the Trinity. Can we then acquit the apostle of the charge of introducing a strange confusion of characters, unless our text be allowed to assert that all things were created *by the Messiah, and for the Messiah*?

The truth I take to be this: All the works which God designed to produce throughout the universe, he delegated Christ to accomplish. All the displays of God which were ever intended to be made to creatures, Christ was appointed to make. The vast plan which involved the whole creation, and all the measures of divine government, was one plan; the execu-

tion of which, in all its parts, was committed to Christ. It is elsewhere said that all things were made *for God*, that is, for the display of his perfections, and for the promotion of that general interest of his kingdom which he benevolently considers his own. In perfect consistency with this, all things are here said to be made for Christ, that is, for the illustration of his mediatorial glory (not indeed as the ultimate and chief end, but rather as the principal mode in which the glory of *God* was to be displayed) and to subserve the vast plan which he was appointed to execute, in the issue of which God will be *all in all*. It would seem then that it was in the character of Messiah that he created the angels, the sun, moon, and stars, and all other things visible and invisible; and that he created them all for himself as Mediator;—in a word, that he created all worlds to subserve his mediatorial plan, the principal scene of which, it is well known, was laid upon this earth. The same apostle in another place declares that God *created all things by Jesus Christ*—and why?—*to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known BY THE CHURCH the manifold wisdom of God.** In one of his addresses to the christian church the apostle expressly asserts, *all things are for your sakes.†*

Does it seem incredible that all other worlds should be created to promote the purposes of grace upon this earth? Why is this more incredible than that the Mediator should upon this earth *purchase the*

* Eph. iii. 9, 10.

† 2 Cor. iv. 15.

glory of governing the rest of the universe, and that he should govern the whole with reference to his church?—points which are, in the clearest manner, revealed. It is said that *he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death:—WHEREFORE God also hath highly exalted him;—that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.—He raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; AND HATH PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIS FEET, AND GAVE HIM TO BE HEAD OVER ALL THINGS TO THE CHURCH, WHICH IS HIS BODY, THE FULLNESS OF HIM THAT FILLETH ALL IN ALL.** (a)

* Phil. ii. 8, 10. Eph. i. 20, 23

(a) The dominion conferred on Christ as a reward for what he performed on earth, seems not to have been limited to his church, but to have extended to the universe. Having by his death fulfilled the part, which in the covenant of redemption he had engaged to perform, he appeared to his disciples, and said unto them, *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.** He was at that time more fully invested with the dominion of the universe, which, by anticipation, he had as Mediator enjoyed before his incarnation. I mean not to suggest the idea of the pre-existence of his human soul; he sustained the office of Mediator, and in this character governed the world, before he possessed any other than the divine nature. This universal dominion, which is temporary, is that which, at the conclusion of the final judgment, he will resign to the Father;† while he will still retain dominion

* *Mat.* xxviii. 18.

† *1 Cor.* xv. 24—28.

What purpose the Mediator intended to answer by other worlds and their inhabitants, in prosecuting the plan of redemption, we do not fully comprehend. The angels, it is well known, are subject to him as ministering spirits to his church, and look with prying curiosity and astonishment into the mysteries of redemption.* But what use he makes of other worlds we are not told in his word, farther than that they are put under his dominion; and we also know that they serve to instruct his church, while they influence, adorn, and enlighten the earth on which it resides. And whatever inhabitants they contain, we must believe that they do now, or will in some future period, bend to look into the transcendent wonders of redemption, and will take lessons of deep instruction and interest from the astonishing scenes which are unfolding on the earth. (a)

But passing by other worlds, the one which we inhabit was certainly made for the Mediator. This is the favoured world where he was to assume the nature that was intended to form the connecting link between God and creatures; where he was to found a church to be *a spectacle to angels and to men*;† where he was to display the most august and awful wonder of his death. Here he was to find a miserable

in Zion, and according to ancient promises will hold the throne of his father David *forever*.

(a) If the sentiment that other worlds were created for the Mediator should not appear sufficiently supported, I am willing it should be

* Heb. i. 14. 1 Pet. i. 12. † 1 Cor. iv. 9.

race, without help and without hope, immersed in vice and ignorance, groaning under the curse of a holy law, and sinking into everlasting wo. Such an occasion was to be presented for the exercise of his unequalled compassion, for an exhibition of the infinite tenderness of his heart; the history of which is inscribed on the tablet of the earth in tears and blood;—the history of which has been a million of times repeated by deeply affected angels, and will be rehearsed in the songs of the redeemed to eternity. To this earth, and to Calvary, methinks I see every eye directed from the most distant world which God has made. All seem to point to this, and say, *Behold, for once, what infinite love could do!*

The several texts and arguments already adduced prove emphatically that this earth and all its furniture were created for the Mediator. And further to confirm this idea let me ask, what valuable purpose, except by means of the Mediator, could a world be expected to answer, which, it was foreseen, would so quickly be ruined by sin? What valuable end, in any other way, has it *in fact* answered? We judge of the design of a thing by the use to which it is put. To what valuable use then has the earth been put, but to bring glory to God

understood as expressed rather hypothetically than positively. The author has no title either to the honour or dishonour of originating the idea, which has been held by divines of reputation, and possesses at least the negative merit of not contradicting any of the doctrines of our church.

and good to creatures, *through the mediation of Christ?* If it was designed for the happiness of men, none have tasted happiness in it since the fall, or found it a passage to heaven, but by the Mediator. That *Priest* only has procured it blessings; that *Prophet* only has instructed its ignorance; that *King* only has dispensed its comforts. If it was created for the glory of God, this glory shines only in the face of Jesus Christ.* *No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*† Him only have men beheld; only *his* works and providence do men contemplate. Not one purpose desirable to benevolence, or illustrative of the wisdom or goodness of its Author, is answered by the earth, but in consequence of the mediation of Christ. And of all the displays of divine glory, the richest appear in his incarnation and atonement, in the pardon and government which he administers in the church. As the earth has in fact answered no desirable purpose, but through the agency of the Mediator, such a fact must have been foreseen in the day of its creation, and it must have been made only for the sake of the good to be accomplished by Christ. It was erected for a theatre on which he might make an exhibition of the divine perfections in redeeming his church, and punishing his enemies: and this being its design, the work of erecting it was, of course, assigned to him for whose use it was intended. He formed every continent and ocean, every

* 2 Cor. iv. 6.

† John, i. 18.

lake and island, every mountain and valley, to serve a race, who, he foresaw, would fall, and whom he was determined to redeem. He created every beast that ranges the desert, every fowl that flutters under the arch of heaven, every fish that dwells in the caves of ocean, 'every drop, and every dust,' to subserve his great design of grace. The whole plan of this world, including creation and providence, including every event from its beginning to the final judgment, was involved in the plan of redemption. The plan is one, though comprehending a vast variety of parts. Among this variety, some parts are designed to fit the earth, by innumerable secret and nameless influences, for the accommodation of a race to be redeemed;—others, to unfold the wretched character and condition of men, to illustrate their need of a Saviour, and the richness of redeeming grace. Others are intended to prepare the way for carrying into effect the purposes of mercy, and to facilitate, in many ways, their accomplishment.

Does the question arise, how is it possible that every minute substance and event should be serviceable to the kingdom of Christ? The speaker does not presume to explain all the particular relations and tendencies of God's works; but this, in general, must be granted,—*they are all designed to promote the glory of God*, though the *manner* cannot be explained. Give me this, and you give me all: for whatever promotes the glory of God was needful to the kingdom of Christ, since the discovery of God to men was an essential part of the plan of restoring them to the enjoyment of him. The objection that

we cannot discover the manner in which every thing renders service to Christ, does not disprove our doctrine. If in so simple a device as a manufactory constructed by human art, buildings must be erected, and many machines, instruments, vessels, and different substances employed, the use of some of which a stranger would be unable to explain, though all are subordinate to one end; it is no wonder that the stupendous plan of redeeming a world should contain an inconceivable variety of parts, the suberviency of many of which, though necessary to the result, should elude our research.

As the earth was created for the Mediator, so it is *preserved* to be the residence of his church; in allusion to which fact the church is called *the salt of the earth*, as being the occasion of saving it from dissolution.*

By Christ, and for Christ, the earth is also governed. Having erected this theatre for an exhibition of redeeming grace, he took the management of it into his own hands, and put it to the use for which it was intended. He early established a church upon it, and in the character of Mediator took into his hands its universal government. Made head over all things to the church, he has marched down the tract of ages, holding the north in his right hand, and the south in his left, with his eye immoveably fixed upon this single cause, and forcing all nations and events to

* Mat. v. 13

pay tribute to it. In the history of his government which the Holy Ghost has sketched, we trace his dealings with nations and individuals for many ages, and view his providence under a column of light which discloses its tendency and object. Here we discover his hand employed behind the scene, in directing the affairs of many inferior nations, and especially of the four great empires of antiquity, with pointed reference to his church. Looking through the glass of prophesy, we discern that throne which Ezekiel saw in his vision, rolling on the wheels of providence down the descent of time to the end of the world, prostrating every interest raised against his church, and overturning to prepare the way for the full establishment of his kingdom upon earth. Under his government, the apostle expressly declares, *all things work together for good to his church; all things are theirs, whether the world, —or things present, or things to come.** The revolutions of empires, rebellions and wars, the councils of kings, and the debates of senates, are all pressed into the service of Christ. Bibles, sacraments, sabbaths, and the effusions of the Holy Spirit, have no other object. Seed time and harvest, famine and pestilence, tempests, volcanoes, and earthquakes, are all made to advance his interest.

As this world was wholly intended for the scene of redemption, *all the good which it contains* belongs to the plan of grace that was laid in Christ. His

* Rom. viii. 28.

1 Cor. iii. 21, 22.

kingdom comprises every valuable object which God proposed to himself in creating, preserving, and governing the world,—the whole amount of his glory upon earth, and the immortal blessedness of millions of men. It is the only cause on earth that is worth an anxious thought. It is the only interest which God pursues or values, and the only object worthy of the attention of men. For this sole object were they created, and placed in this world, with social affections adapted to their present state, with employments appointed for the preservation of their lives. No one interest distinct from the kingdom of Christ are they required to pursue. No laws but those which appertain to this kingdom, and which of course respect only the concerns of it, were ever enacted by heaven to direct their conduct. Their secular employments, their social duties, are enjoined only as subordinate to the interests of this kingdom. Their private and social propensities they are not indeed required to extinguish; but with these about them, to march with a strong and steady step directly towards this great object, with their eye filled with its magnitude, and with hearts glowing with desires for its promotion. It is required that *whether they eat or drink, or whatever they do, they should do all* with reference to this object. As then we can rely on the decision of infinite wisdom, expressed both in the example and precepts of God, we are assured that this kingdom ought to engross the supreme cares of men, and exert a commanding influence over all their actions;—that it should be the great object of their lives, and their governing motive every hour. The bosom

of the *child* should be taught to beat with delight at the name of Jesus, before it is capable of comprehending the nature of his kingdom. The *youth* ought to regulate all his pleasures, his actions, and his hopes, with an eye fixed on this kingdom. The *man* ought to respect it in every important undertaking, in all his common concerns, in the expressions of his lips, in the government of his passions, in the thoughts of his heart. Not worldly emolument or distinction, but the interest of the blessed Redeemer, should be his highest object,—should be daily and hourly loved and sought with all his heart and soul. To this should he consecrate all his talents, all his influence, all his wealth. Instead of pursuing with headlong zeal their separate interests, all men should join in promoting this kingdom, as the common interest of mankind,—the great concern for which they were sent into the world. .

If the eyes of men were opened, they would see this cause to be of infinite value,—*worthy* to be the object for which all things were created. It is the cause which not only all the energies of nature, but all beings and agents, conspire to advance. It is the beloved cause on which the heart of the Son of God was set, when it beat in the babe of Bethlehem, and when it bled on the point of the spear. It is the cause to which angels have zealously ministered; to which devils have involuntarily lent their aid. It is the cause which has engaged the ardent attention of wise and good men in every age. It is the cause for which patriarchs prayed, for which prophets taught,

for which apostles toiled, for which martyrs bled. For the consummation of this cause upon earth many eyes have waited, from age to age, in unwearied expectation; *many prophets and righteous men have desired to see it*; many who sealed their faith with their blood, looked forward to this glorious event with eyes glistening in the agonies of death. *The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together to bring forth this grand consummation.*

The cause of Christ is the only one which will *prevail* and *live* amidst the wrecks of time. Strong as the arm of omnipotence, it will hold on in its majestic course, bearing down and crushing every thing that resists its progress. Every interest that is placed on this foundation is safe; but inevitable ruin awaits every thing beside. Wo to the man whose destinies are not united with the kingdom of Christ. Wo, wo to the man who sets himself to oppose this holy kingdom.

Though at present disregarded by men, the kingdom of Christ is destined to engage the profound attention of all nations. It is destined to banish from the abodes of men the miserable effects of the fall, and to restore all the tribes of the earth to themselves and to God. When the glories of this kingdom shall cover all lands,—when, after a long succession of wintry years, the spring time of the world shall come,—when the beauties of holiness shall clothe every region, and songs of salvation shall float in every breeze;—then will it be seen that the world was not

made in vain. It is transporting to look down the vale of time, and see the miseries of six thousand years come to an end, the convulsions of a disordered world composed, and the glory of Zion filling all the earth. Lend me an angel's harp, while I look forward to approaching scenes, which, distant as they then were, enraptured the souls of the holy prophets. How divinely did they sing, when, from the mount of vision, they beheld across the shade of many troublous years the church standing on the field she had won, triumphantly shouting, *Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.** Sometimes in the midst of their sorrows, while nothing was escaping them but the sounds of a breaking heart, a glimpse of this glory would break upon their view; and then the tear which stood in their eye forgot to fall, their half-uttered sigh died upon their tongue, they awoke to to rapture, and exclaimed, *Thou shalt arise and have mercy on Zion, for the time to favour her, yea the set time is come.†*

The church has hitherto possessed but a small proportion of a world created for its use; but the day is drawing on, when *the everlasting gospel shall be preached to every kindred, and tongue, and people;—when from the rising of the sun, unto the going down of the same, the name of the Lord shall be great among the gentiles;—when all shall know him from the least to the greatest, for the earth shall be*

* Isa. xxv & xxvi. † See an instance of this nature in the cii. Psalm.

filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Their sun shall no more go down, nor their moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be their everlasting light, and the days of their mourning shall be ended. A thousand times ten thousand captives shall drop their chains, and come forth to light with joys too big for utterance; and this miserable world, once the emblem of hell,—this miserable world, after being so long shaken with tempests, shall, like the waters of a peaceful pool, reflect the image of heaven. Paradise shall be restored; and then shall appear, to the confusion of all the enemies of Christ, the blessed efficacy of his gospel to heal the wounds of a bleeding world. This is the triumph of the woman's seed;—this, the bruising of the serpent's head. Is not every christian rapt as he thus views from Pisgah the promised rest on earth? Is enthusiasm here a crime? Would not coldness be rebellion? Come, thou *Desire of nations*, come! Come, thou restorer of a world!

Lo, a still more transporting sight appears! My ravished eye beholds the kingdom of Christ advanced to the glories of the heavenly state. Faith looks through the veil which conceals the eternal world, and discerns thousands of millions of happy beings, ransomed from destruction and brought home to their Father's house;—it beholds the church encircling the throne of her Redeemer, casting her honours

at his feet, buried in the ocean of his glory, united to the Father by ineffable relation, while all heaven is ringing with hosannas for redeeming love:—*there, there is the august kingdom completed which God at first undertook to erect!* Say now,—pronounce,—is not the object worthy of all the means employed for its attainment? Do you hesitate? Look, and think again: Follow only one human soul into eternity; trace its endless course through delights which flesh and blood could not sustain, or through fire sufficient to melt down all the planets;—pursue it through the ascending degrees of its eternal progression, see it leaving behind the former dimensions of seraphim and cherubim, and still stretching towards God;—or sinking forever in the bottomless abyss—My God! what an event is the redemption of a single soul! O the infinite mercy that redeemed such countless millions! O the boundless compassion of Christ,—the ocean without a bottom or a shore! *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God,* which are disclosed in this unfathomable plan of grace!

Where are infatuated infidels now? Bring up hither all their bands to behold the glorious Agent, and the glorious interest, which they oppose. Julian, Celsus, and Porphyry, what now think you of Christ! Voltaire, Hume, Gibbon, and Bolingbroke, where are now those tongues which blasphemed the anointed Messiah? Let our subject burst like ten thousand thunders upon those, who in rejecting the Mediator resist *all* the designs of God, who would destroy the *only* interest of the universe, who are fatally contending with all the energies of omnipotence!

Oh that I had a voice to reach the hearts of impenitent sinners of every class. Knew ye the infinite glories of our Messiah, the darling of heaven, the wonder of angels, the august Agent of the universe;—knew ye your ruin and necessities;—knew ye the tenderness of Him who wept because you would sin,—who, to save your wretched souls, sweet drops of blood, and expired on the ragged irons; you would not thus idly pass by his reeking cross, you would not thus refuse him reverence, and coldly cast away the benefits of his dying love.

In applying this subject I would summon, were I able, all the kingdoms of the earth to arise in one mass to urge forward the cause of the Redeemer. Assemble, ye people, from the four quarters of the globe; awake, ye nations, from your sleeping pillow,—combine in this grand object of your existence,—this common interest of the world. Ye kindreds and tribes, why are ye searching for happiness out of this kingdom, and overlooking the cause of Christ, as though he had no right to hold an interest on earth? Know ye that no man is licensed to set up another interest on this ground which is sacred to the Redeemer. What have you to do in *this* world if you will not serve the Lord's Anointed? If you will not submit to his dominion, and join to advance his cause, go, go to some other world—this world was made for Christ.—But whither can you go from his presence? All worlds are under his dominion. Ah! then return, and let your bosoms swell with the noble desire to be fellow-workers with the inhabitants of other worlds in serving this glorious kingdom.

My brethren, *my brethren!* while all the agents in the universe are employed, some with fervent desire, and others by involuntary instrumentality, to advance the cause of Christ, will an individual of you refuse it your cordial support? Can you, in the centre of universal action, consent to remain in a torpid state, absorbed in private cares, and contracted into a littleness for which you were not designed? Awake, and generously expand your desires to encircle this benevolent and holy kingdom. God, who has set you an example of exclusive regard to this object, demands it of you. Christ, who purchased the church with his blood, demands it of you. The holy angels, who incessantly minister to the church, demand it of you. The illustrious army of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, by their services and sufferings for the church, demand it of you. How then can you meet the eyes of this awful company of spectators, who watch you from every window of heaven, unless you rouse every sleeping faculty, and with your collected powers join to advance the kingdom of the Redeemer?

My brethren, there is much for you to do: Though the world was made for Christ, though all the nations of it are intended to swell his triumph, yet, at this very moment, five parts out of six of that race for whom he shed his sacred blood, are perishing in ignorance of his gospel, chained in miserable and degrading servitude to satan. Many of them are also suffering all the hardships of a barbarous state, without domestic or civil order, wallowing in

the sinks of vice, and besmearing the altars of devils with human blood. Touched with affection for Him who pitied us that we might pity others,—for Him who, *though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich*;—can we forbear to cherish the pious wish that he may enjoy the reward of his dying love? Do not our hearts throb with desire to be instrumental in giving him *the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession*?

Distinguished will be the glory of that generation who shall be selected to bear a conspicuous part in this blessed work. If those who are now alive on the earth decline this honour, it will certainly be seized by a more generous and holy posterity. To the present generation, however, it seems fairly tendered by the existing indications of divine providence. Great events appear to be struggling in their birth. In the eager attitude of hope, many are looking for the dawn of a better day, and even believe that they already see the light purpling the east. The Christian world, after long contenting itself with *prayers* for the heathen, and with saying, *Be ye warmed and filled*, is awaking to more charitable views. Men, warmed with apostolic zeal, have abandoned the comforts of civilized life, and are gone to the ends of the earth, to bear to benighted nations the first tidings of a precious Saviour. Numerous societies have risen into existence on both sides of the Atlantic, under whose patronage missionaries are now employed from India to the American wilderness, from Greenland to the southern ocean. Some of the

first fruits of their labours, I hope, are already gathered into the heavenly garner. While our brethren are thus summoning us from the four quarters of the earth to *come up to the help of the Lord*, let us not incur the curse of *Meroz*; let us quickly put our hands to the work lest it be done without us: *If we altogether hold our peace at this time, then shall there enlargement arise from another place; but we and our father's house may be destroyed.**—But why should I thus speak? You, my brethren, have already felt the heavenly impulse; you have given to the Lord; and the affecting accounts of your missionaries show that you have received, thus early, the blessing of some who were ready to perish.

Let us still pursue the glorious design, and rise above every objection which a cold, calculating spirit may cast in our way. We are bound to persevere by the express command to *go forth into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*. We are bound by mercies which we ourselves have received. Had not benevolent men devoted their property and lives to bring the gospel to our fathers, we might, this evening, have been assembled, not in this temple of God, but to sacrifice our children on the altar of devils. Methinks I hear those generous spirits crying from the verge of heaven, *Freely ye have received, freely give*.

Let me never fall into the hands of the man who, while he refuses to aid the missionary efforts of his

* Esth. iv. 14.

brethren, coolly says that he submits the fate of the heathen to God. Do you call this submission? Put it to the test;—does it preserve you equally composed by the bed of your dying child? While the pressure of private afflictions can torture your soul, call not the apathy with which you view nations sinking into hopeless ruin,—call it not submission, nor bring the government of God to sanction a temper as cruel as it is common. Will the government of God convert the heathen without the means of grace? What nation was ever so converted? It is contrary to the established method of divine grace. *How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?* No, my brethren, missionaries *must* go among them; and they *must be supported*. They cannot support themselves; they cannot derive support from the heathen; nor can they expect to be *fed by ravens*. Who then shall sustain the expense if not the christian world? and what portion of the christian world rather than the American churches? and what district of these churches rather than that in which we are assembled? and what individuals rather than ourselves? Heaven has given us the means; we are living in prosperity on the very lands from which the wretched pagans have been ejected; from the recesses of whose wilderness a moving cry is heard, *When it is well with you, think of poor Indians*. This is not ideal; we have received such messages written with their tears.

No, we will not shift this honourable burden upon others. We would sooner contend for it as a privilege. But we need not contend; it is ample enough

to satisfy the desires of all. The expense of christianizing only the savages on our borders will be great; but to extend effectual aid to all the benighted tribes on the American continent, to the numerous islands, to the vast regions of Asia and Africa, would demand the resources of christendom. Every man is under bonds to God to bear his full proportion of this expense. For whom but for the Redeemer was your wealth created? Thus saith the Lord, *Your silver, and your gold is mine.* The flocks of Kedar, and the gold of Sheba, were created to bring tribute to his church. Should we sordidly close our hands against him, he can, with infinite ease, extort a hundred fold, by sending a blast into our fields, a disease into our families, or a fire into our dwellings. It is a maxim that admits of general application, *Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for Christ's sake, the same shall save it.*—*The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself. He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again.* By one shower of rain, by one restraint upon the winds that would sink your ship, by one breeze sent to fan from your door the pestilential vapour, he can repay you. And he can bestow the blessings of eternity on you and your children. The best security for remuneration is offered. He tenders you his blessing to reward your charity. And now are you christians? The trial is to be made.——— The everlasting fates of men turn upon the existence of a temper to prefer the blessing of God to mammon. *To the merciful he will shew himself merciful;*

but whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.

I have nothing to spare, is the plea of sordid reluctance. But a far different sentiment will be formed amidst the scenes of the last day. Men now persuade themselves that they have nothing to spare till they can support a certain style of luxury, and have provided for the establishment of children. But in the awful hour when you, and I, and all the pagan nations, shall be called from our graves to stand before the bar of Christ, what comparison will these objects bear to the salvation of a single soul? Eternal mercy! let not the blood of heathen millions, in that hour, be found in our skirts!———Standing, as I now do, in sight of a dissolving universe, beholding the dead arise, the world in flames, the heavens fleeing away, all nations convulsed with terror, or rapt in the vision of the Lamb,—I pronounce the conversion of a single pagan of more value than all the wealth that ever omnipotence produced. On such an awful subject it becomes me to speak with caution; but I solemnly aver, that were there but one heathen in the world, and he in the remotest corner of Asia, if no greater duty confined us at home, it would be worth the pains for all the people in America to embark together to carry the gospel to him. Place your soul in his soul's stead. Or rather consent for a moment to change condition with the savages on our borders. Were *you* posting on to the judgment of the great day, in the darkness and pollution of pagan idolatry, and were *they* living in wealth in this very district of the church, how hard would it seem for your

neighbours to neglect your misery! When you should open your eyes in the eternal world, and discover the ruin in which they had suffered you to remain, how would you reproach them that they did not even sell their possessions, if no other means were sufficient, to send the gospel to you. My flesh trembles at the prospect!———But they *shall not* reproach us. It shall be known in heaven that we could pity our brethren. We will send them all the relief in our power, and will enjoy the luxury of reflecting what happiness we may entail on generations yet unborn, if we can only effect the conversion of a single tribe.

All that remains for me to add is a fervent prayer, that He who is viewing from heaven the events of this evening, may incline your hearts to the noblest charity, and may reward it with everlasting blessings on you and your children. Amen.

THE END.

